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AUTHOR Reiss, Philip
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ABSTRACT

This is a report of a New York City school district educational project funded under Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Act of 1965 which provided a supplementary reading and mathematics readiness program for early childhood CRMD pupils ranging in age from five to seven. The major goal of the program was to increase the levels of student proficiency in these skill areas. Specific emphasis was placed on language and speech development, motor coordination, self-expression, and self-help activities and work habits. Thirty classes in eleven schools representing the five boroughs participated in the program. Nineteen para-professionals conducted small group activities and individualized instructional sessions under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Program supervision was provided by a project coordinator. Alternate forms of the Metropolitan Readiness Test were administered as pre and posttests. An analysis of the data revealed that students made statistically significant gains in their reading and mathematics skills. Program activity observations and staff interviews were used to evaluate this project. It met its objectives successfully. (Author/BS)

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EVALUATION REPORT

Function No. 09-58614

The Reading and Math Readiness Skills Program for Young Delayed Learners

(School Year 1974-1975)

Prepared by:
Philip Reiss

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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An evaluation of a New York City school district educational project funded under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (PL 89-10) performed for the Board of Education of the City of New York for the 1974-75 school year.

VD016880

June, 1975

Dr. Anthony J. Polemeni, Director

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION
110 LIVINGSTON STREET, BROOKLYN, N. Y. 11201

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Chapter 1

Program Description

This project provided a supplementary reading and mathematics readiness program for 145 Title I eligible early childhood CRMD pupils five to seven years old. The goal of the program was to increase levels of proficiency in these readiness skill areas.

Thirty classes in eleven different schools were selected in the five boroughs. Students were referred, screened and evaluated on the basis of chronological age, level of retardation, stage of toilet training, ambulation and prior learning.

Each pupil was given an academic evaluation which provided a learning prescription. Appropriate assistance to ameliorate weaknesses was provided by the paraprofessionals, in consultation with the classroom teacher. The program emphasized the special needs of the young delayed learner: social development and independence, language and self-expression, self-help skills and work habits. Parent training sessions were conducted to enable parents to reinforce school activities in the home.

Nineteen paraprofessionals conducted small group activities and individualized instructional sessions under the supervision of the classroom teacher. Overall program supervision was provided by the project coordinator. Language and speech development, motor coordination, self expression and self-help activities were stressed. The program was initiated March 11, 1975 and continued until the end of the school year.

Chapter II

Evaluation Design

The evaluation design for this program was based upon two evaluation objectives. The objectives and the strategies used to attain them are described in this chapter.

Evaluation Objective 1: To assess the extent to which the participants have demonstrated statistically significant improvement in their reading and mathematics readiness skills.

The Metropolitan Readiness Test, a standardized reading readiness test, was administered to all participants in the program. Pre-testing, using Form A, was completed during the last two weeks in March. Post-tests (Form B) were administered during the last week in May. Differences in scores were analyzed by computing correlated t-tests.

It was not possible to test 32 (22%) of the 145 children who participated in the program. Five children were absent or had been discharged at the time the post-test was administered. The remaining 27 children were unable to follow the directions of the test. It was not possible to locate any standardized schedule of reading and mathematics readiness developmental skills which could be administered to these children.

Evaluation Objective 2: To determine the extent to which the program, as actually carried out, coincided with the program as described in the project proposal.

This objective was attained by visiting each of the program sites, at which time program activities were observed and interviews were held with paraprofessionals, classroom teachers and resource teachers or other administrators responsible for the early childhood CRMD classes.

Chapter III

Findings

This chapter will first present the findings based on the results of the standardized tests and then those based upon observations and interviews.

Standardized Test Results

The first evaluation objective involved the assessment of participants' improvement as measured by the Metropolitan Readiness Test. Pre-test scores resulted in a mean of 37.3 (S.D. = 16.4) while post-test scores obtained a mean of 42.4 (S.D. = 14.2). A correlated t-test of the difference between these scores resulted in a value of 4.80 which is significant at the .01 level (see Table I). Thus, this objective was attained.

Table I

Mean Raw Scores of Program Participants on the Metropolitan Readiness Tests

N	Pretest Mean	S.D.	Posttest Mean	S.D.	t-ratio
113	37.3	16.4	42.4	14.2	4.80*

*$p \leq .01$

It should be noted that although this is designed as a group test, all testing for this program was conducted on an individualized basis.

Observation and Interview Findings

Each site at which the program was conducted was visited by the evaluator. At the time of these visits, program activities were observed and personnel involved in the program were interviewed. The findings derived from these activites will be reported in this section.

Observations of Program Activities

The program was found to be fully staffed by a project coordinator and 19 paraprofessionals. Each paraprofessional provided individual and small group instruction to approximately eight children, drawn from one to three early childhood classes in a single school. The program served a total of 145 children, five more than required by the proposal.

Each child received between 30 and 45 minutes of instruction daily. When not working with individual children, the paraprofessional would assist the teacher in group activities, prepare materials or review chilren's progress with the teacher or resource teacher. The following is a typical daily schedule:

9:00 - 10:00 A.M.	Assist teacher in small group instructional activities within the classroom. Work in learning centers, such as language development, perceptual motor skills or self-help skills.
10:00 - 11:00 A.M.	Individual instruction in reading and mathematics readiness.
11:00 - 12:00 A.M.	Planning conference with teacher, case follow-up, preparation of instructional materials or parent workshops.
12:00 - 12:50 P.M.	Lunch
1:00 - 2:00 P.M.	Assist in group activities such as music, creative arts or language experiences.

The program coordinator scheduled a two day orientation period at the initiation of the program. Teaching techniques, assessment, monitoring progress and record keeping were among the topics of these sessions. Follow-up activities involved periodic observations of and conferences with each paraprofessional. This close, supportive supervision appeared to have been very helpful to the program.

Early in the program, each paraprofessional completed an

observational report on each child assigned. This became the basis for developing an individual plan. Prescriptive plans were developed jointly by the teacher and paraprofessional. Individual folders were maintained for each child. These contained daily and weekly logs, in which plans and progress were noted, as well as samples of the child's written work.

The program began in each of the schools with no major problems. The delay in initiation was a function of delayed funding. Facilities were good for this program. While most of the paraprofessionals conducted the tutorial sessions within the classroom, in four schools separate rooms were set aside for these special activities.

A variety of materials was already available in most classrooms. As new supplies arrived, the program was able to add more instructional aids to these classrooms. The paraprofessionals also showed remarkable ingenuity and ambition in creating original aids designed to meet special needs of particular children.

The program was fortunate in having been able to recruit a highly motivated, creative group of paraprofessionals. They worked very well with the classroom teachers and were extraordinarily competent in working with young children. Classroom activities appeared to be handled in good team fashion. Mutual respect was evident. The paraprofessionals were observed to be engaged in worthwhile activities which involved aiding children to learn.

The extensive amount of individualized and small group instruction, even for a relatively short duration, undoubtedly contributed substantially to children's progress. Children were helped to learn as well as to develop self-respect and respect

for others.

Interview Findings

As part of the school visits, the evaluator interviewed the paraprofessionals, 27 of the 30 classroom teachers and all but one of the resource teachers or administrators responsible for the early childhood CRMD classes served by the program.

The resource teachers were all highly enthusiastic about the program. Most felt that it was vital to have a paraprofessional's assistance to operate a good early childhood CRMD program. Several stated that the potential impact of the program was limited by its starting so late in the school year.

Almost all of the resource teachers and administrators, as well as most of the classroom teachers, objected to the use of the Metropolitan Readiness Test as an evaluative instrument. They felt that this test was at too high a level for their children and that it does not adequately reflect the goals of the early childhood CRMD program. Further, many indicated that they could obtain only meager diagnostic information from this instrument and that test administration required a disproportionate amount of time in relationship to the usefulness of the results.

The resource teachers were very pleased with the work of the paraprofessionals. Most noted the highly competent quality of their participation and the positive responses of the children.

The classroom teachers were, if anything, more positive about the program than the resource teachers. Almost all described the work of the paraprofessional assigned to them in the most glowing terms. The teachers all indicated that the additional assistance was having a significant impact upon their programs.

The teachers regretted that the program began so late in the school year, viewing this as its only serious limitation. The major product of this was a marked reduction in potential parent involvement. There were few opportunities to initiate parent workshops at this time of year. The teachers indicated that they would be eager to encourage increased parental involvement if the program were to begin early in the school year.

The interviews with the paraprofessionals revealed the depth and breadth of the experience they brought to the program. More than half of the paraprofessionals held B.A. degrees in Elementary Education and one was enrolled in a program leading to a master's degree in Special Education. Many of these individuals also had from one to three years prior experience working with delayed learners.

The nine remaining paraprofessionals were also an experienced group. Most of them had at least some prior experience with young children. All of the paraprofessionals who had no formal college training have applied for entry into the Career Ladder Program.

The paraprofessionals voiced an enthusiasm for the program as well as an interest in and sensitivity towards the children which had been evident during the observations. They were eager to share information about children's progress and to demonstrate techniques they used and materials they had developed. Their enthusiasm, concern and professionalism has no doubt been a major contribution to the success of this program.

Chapter IV

Summary of Major Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

Major Findings

145 Title I eligible children in thirty early childhood CRMD classes received a supplementary reading and mathematics readiness skills program. Nineteen paraprofessionals provided individual and small group instruction from mid-March to the end of the school year. Children in the program gained an average of 5.1 points on the Metropolitan Readiness Test, a gain which was statistically significant.

While all personnel connected with the program were generally positive in their evaluations of its effectiveness, they regretted that it began so late in the school year. Many also expressed serious reservations about the use of the Metropolitan Readiness Test as an evaluative instrument for this program.

The program was carried out in a fashion which essentially coincided with the description contained in the project proposal. One exception was the limited emphasis placed on parental involvement. Teachers attributed this to the late start of the program.

Conclusions

This program appears to have been generally successful. Resource teachers, classroom teachers and paraprofessionals reported satisfaction with it. The gains made by children served by the program were statistically significant, indicating attainment of the major project objectives.

Areas of concern were in regard to the evaluation instrument used and the limited parent involvement which was achieved.

Recommendations

This program should be continued next year and expanded to include as many early childhood CRMD classes as possible.

The following specific suggestions are offerred for improving the program:

1. The program should begin as early as possible and extend for the entire school year.

2. Parent workshops and other forms of parent involvement should be a major focus of the program.

3. An alternative evaluation instrument should be considered, one which might provide information more useful for the design of individualized programs. The Progress Assessment Chart (Gunzburg, 1968) or the Preschool Attainment Record (Doll, 1966) might be considered.

References

Doll, E.A. Preschool Attainment Record. Circle Pines, Minnesota, 1966.

Gunzburg, H.C. Social competence and mental handicap. Baltimore, Maryland: Williams and Wilkins, 1968.

The Reading & Math Readiness Skills Program for Young Delayed Learners

Function 09-58614

Use Table 30C. for norm referenced achievement data not applicable to tables 30A. and 30B.

30C. Standardized Test Results

In the table below, enter the requested information about the tests used to evaluate the effectiveness of major project components/activities in achieving desired objectives. Before completing this form, read all footnotes. Attach additional sheets if necessary.

Component Code	Activity Code	Test Used[1]	Form		Level		Total N[2]	Group ID[3]	Number Tested		Pretest			Posttest			Statistical Data		
			Pre	Post	Pre	Post			N[4]	Score Type[5]	Date	Mean	SD[6]	Date	Mean	SD[6]	Test[7]	Value[8]	Level[9]
60861	722	MRT 69	A	B	R	R	145	61	113	6	9/75	37.3	16.4	5/75	42.4	14.2	t	4.80	.01
60961	722*																		

1/ Identify Test Used and Year of Publication (MAT-58; CAT-70, etc.)
2/ Total number of participants in the activity
3/ Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 5). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.
4/ Total number of participants included in the pre and post test calculations.
5/ 1 = grade equivalent; 2 = percentile rank; 3 = Z Score; 4 = Standard score (publisher's); 5 = stanine; 6 = raw score; 7 = other.
6/ S.D. = Standard Deviation
7/ Test statistic (e.g., t; F; X^2).
8/ Obtained value
9/ Specify level of statistical significance obtained (e.g., $p \leq .05$; $p \leq .01$).

*This test includes mathematics within the total raw score. Separation of mathematics score is not possible.

OFFICE OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION - DATA LOSS FORM

(attach to MIR, item #30) Function # 09-58614

In this table enter all Data Loss information. Between MIR, item #30 and this form, all participants in each activity must be accounted for. The component and activity codes used in completion of item #30 should be used here so that the two tables match. See definitions below table for further instructions.

Component Code	Activity Code	(1) Group I.D.	(2) Test Used	(3) Total N	(4) Number Tested/ Analyzed	(5) Participants Not Tested/ Analyzed		(6) Reasons why students were not tested, or if tested, were not analyzed	
						N	%		Number/ Reason
60861	722	61	MAT-69	145	113	32	22%	Unable to follow directions	27
								Absent or discharged	5
60961	722	61	Mat-69	145	113	32	22%	Mathematics test scores are included above.	--
								Unable to follow directions or absent	32

(1) Identify the participants by specific grade level (e.g., grade 3, grade 9). Where several grades are combined, enter the last two digits of the component code.

(2) Identify the test used and year of publication (MAT-70, SDAT-74, etc.).

(3) Number of participants in the activity.

(4) Number of participants included in the pre and posttest calculations found on item#30.

(5) Number and percent of participants not tested and/or not analyzed on item#30.

(6) Specify all reasons why students were not tested and/or analyzed. For each reason specified, provide a separate number count. If any further documentation is available, please attach to this form. If further space is needed to specify and explain data loss, attach additional pages to this form.